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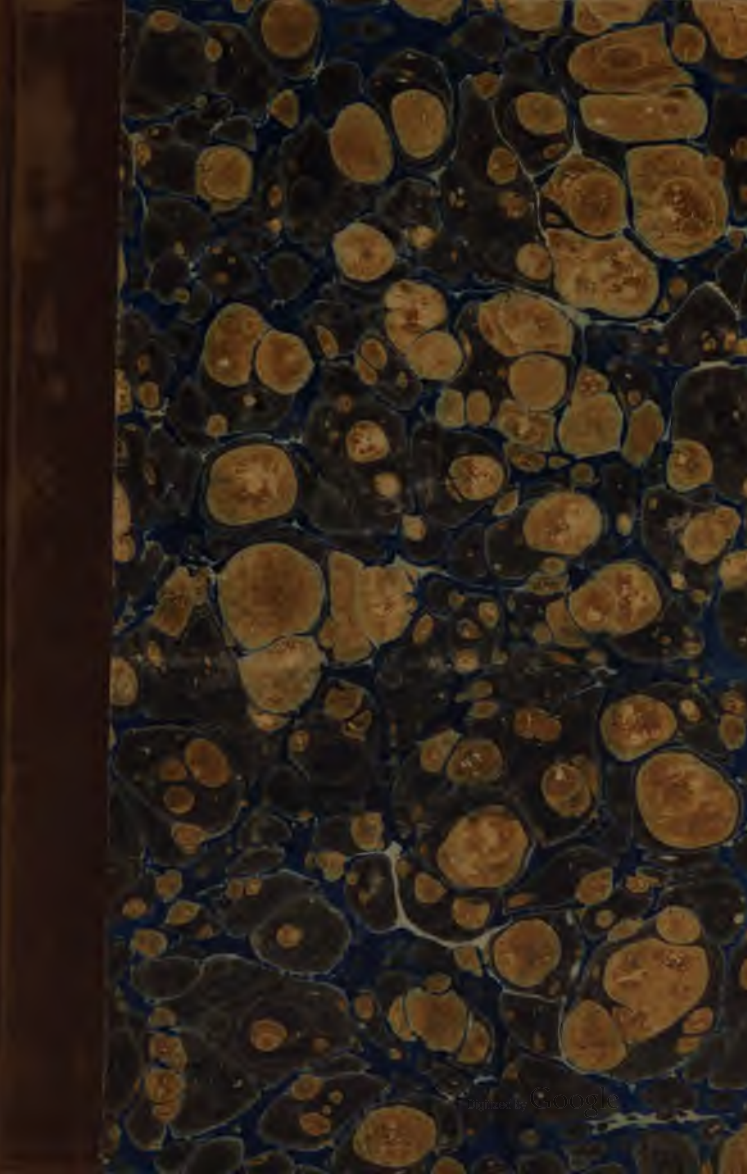
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PREDESTINATION
AND
ELECTION,
CONSIDERED SCRIPTURALLY,
WITH REFERENCE TO
THE SEVENTEENTH ARTICLE OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
AND CONTRASTED WITH
CALVINISTIC INTERPRETATION.

BY WILLIAM MERRY, Esq.

"I REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD; I MEDITATE ON ALL THY WORKS;
I MUSE ON THE WORK OF THY HANDS."—*Psalms* 143.

*Any Profit arising from the Sale of this Volume, will be devoted, as a
Mite, in aid of the Funds of the Royal Berkshire Hospital.*

Reading :

PRINTED BY G. LOVEJOY, LONDON-STREET.

1843.

P R E F A C E.

If it be asked why a subject, which has ever been considered as one of much difficulty, should have been undertaken by a Layman, suffer my answer to be, a prayer that each of you, my readers, will, in the charity of your hearts, conceive such reasons as may most truly breathe of brotherly love—of “peace, good will towards man.”

I have reason to believe that present times and opinions call for such examination ; and I think, with Wilberforce, that “It is the duty of every man to promote the happiness of his fellow creatures to the utmost of his power.” I feel, with Bishop Hall, that “If what I have here meant well be as well taken, and well improved, I shall have comfort in the quieting of many hearts and many tongues ; if not, at least I shall have comfort in the quietness of my own heart, which tells me I have wished well to the Church of God.”

I might add, with the learned and judicious Hooker, that “All things written in this booke I humbly and meekly submit to the censure of the grave and Reverend Prelates within this land, and to the judgment of learned men, and the consideration of all men, wherein I may happily erre, as others before me have done.”

But, if error there be, I would fain believe that evil there will be none; for it will at least be seen that I am *not* "a man under authority," and for this reason, (as in a former volume,*) my name is made known. On me, therefore, and not upon the truth, be all blame,—unto God be all the glory, if the holy cause of truth be advanced, not hindered. "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind," and, like the "more noble" Bereans, "search the Scriptures whether these things are so." For thus advises Locke, "Whoever would attain to a true knowledge of the Christian Religion, in the full and just extent of it, let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament, wherein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter."

"Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth,
O Lord, and teach me thy judgments."

WILLIAM MERRY.

Shinefield, 29th June, 1843.

* "The Philosophy of a Happy Futurity," published in aid of the funds of the Royal Berkshire Hospital.—*G. Lovejoy, Reading.*

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION

CONSIDERED SCRIPTURALLY.

The doctrine of election will not be adequately comprehended, without reference to the doctrine of original sin, and of God's foreknowledge; on which points, therefore, the following brief summary is submitted.

Holy Scripture reveals to us, that when "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth," and in His wisdom ordained rules by which His creation should be governed and preserved as one beautiful system, among other primeval ordinances, was the divine decree, that *like should produce its like*, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit, *after his kind*," and "every living creature that moveth," of the earth, of the air, and of the waters, "*after their kind*."

As a consequence, when "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," man,

though placed at the head of creation, and having dominion, was subject to the same divine law by which all created things were to "increase and multiply and replenish the earth," namely, "after their kind."

Thus, had our first parents, made as they were, "a little lower than the Angels;" majestic and graceful of stature; "in the image of God;" remained in their primal innocence "faithful over a little," their *very* little test of obedience and fealty;—had they, before whom God placed the teeming luxuriance and profusion of paradise, giving them all things richly to enjoy, all save one deadly fruit;—had they *believed God's word* that they should "surely die" if disobedient, and not inclined their ear, in wanton preference, to Satan, the father of lies, who said, "ye shall *not* surely die;"—then had we their descendants been pure and sinless, because the *source* would have been pure. Like would have produced its like.

But, inasmuch as this fundamental law of Providence, by which all creation else was to be sustained in uniformity, and with the same powers and instincts, could not be set aside because man departed from that law, nor because He, who

" Binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will,"

passing nevertheless forewarned judgement on the *mis-*use of that freedom of will,—hence we see, that the original source becoming impure instead of pure, our first

parents having sinned against God, could only be the fountain of like impurity throughout the stream of time. "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree bear olive berries? Either a vine figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." (James 3. 11.) "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." (Matt. 7. 16.) We know, on the contrary, that as surely as "a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit," (Matt. 7. 17.) so, unavoidably, and by an unchangeable law, does that which is born of the flesh inherit the evil inherent in the flesh. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job 14. 4.) "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25. 4.) "There is no man that sinneth not." (1. Kings 8. 46.) "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3. 23.) "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves." (1. John, 1. 8.) And "the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6. 23).

The stern fact, so traced from the Old Testament into the New; is thus forced upon our unwilling conviction, that as our church expresses it, man is "by nature born in sin, the child of wrath," and consequently of condemnation. The gates of Paradise and of Heaven, "*Into which there can in no wise enter anything that defileth,*" are barred against us by an elemental law, not peculiar in its application to man, but affecting and ruling all creation, and operating healthfully upon every work of God's hand except man, the one atom in a wonder-

ful universe which has presumed to doubt its Creator's word, and to contravene His will ; and has thus perverted that ordinance, which would have been his security and blessing, into a curse and a punishment. We cannot escape this truth. We cannot avoid distinguishing the evil of original sin, apart from actual sin, still actively influencing our nature, when we behold the struggling, though powerless, passions and tendencies of infancy and childhood. In vain would human pride murmur, and contend that if this be so,—if moral corruption, like the mental taint of insanity, or any other of “ the numerous ills that flesh is heir to,” be thus the result of inheritance “ Why doth He yet find fault”? (Rom. 9. 19.) “ What have *I* done, what is *mine* iniquity”? (1. Sam. 20. 1.) Such argument, even pushed to the extremest charge against what may appear, until farther examined, as contrary to God's justice, would in no degree avert or weaken the inevitable truth. *The fact* remains, obviously a fact, however much we may conceive cause, rightfully, or not, to complain against it. The son who inherits infirmity, mental or bodily, from his progenitors, is not less certainly afflicted because not afflicted through his own fault. Struggle as we will against that which humbles us, the ingenuous mind will ultimately find itself compelled to understand the saying of Job, “ I have said to corruption thou art my father : to the worm thou art my mother and my sister : and where is now my hope ?” (17. 14.)

Blessed be God, it is precisely the heart most sincerely touched with a conscious sense of human helplessness, that will seek the further instruction which Revelation affords, and thus taught, will be enabled to say, also, with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold." (19. 25.)

It is at this point, as it appears to me, when the paramount necessity of some means of escape, apart from ourselves, from the state of condemnation in which man is born, becomes apparent to us in its real awe and fearfulness, that the *Scriptural* doctrine of election, as distinguished from the human subtleties and contradictions with which it has been encumbered, opens upon the christian mind, in its sublimity and simplicity and comfort. "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, thou art mine." (Is. 43. 1.) "Those who have formed a true value of their lost and helpless state," truly remarks Wilberforce,* "will most gladly listen to the sound, and most justly estimate the value of such a deliverance." The manner of which deliverance we now proceed to learn.

In the thoughts we have been pursuing thus far, we have seen God in the Majesty of Omnipotence,—“Let there be light, and there was light :” of wisdom, “And

* Practical View of Christianity.

God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good!" We are now permitted to contemplate Him, as He has been pleased to make Himself known to us, in His attributes of FOREKNOWLEDGE, JUSTICE, and MERCY.

It is revealed to us, that, "Before the foundations of the world were laid," while God, as we may comprehend, conceived a new creation, and was about to will its existence,—while God the Son, "By whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made," † was ready to fulfil,—and while "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," the earth being "without form and void,"—"God said, let us make man in our own image," and seeing, *foreseeing* as we should express it, that Adam, being tempted, would fall, predestined, *of His own election or choice*, and "according to the good pleasure of His will," the forgiveness of his fallen race, through the mediation of divine love in the willing sacrifice of His blessed Son,—the alone way of reconciliation between God and man. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure, then said I, Lo, I come." ‡ "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine*help." (Hosea, 13. 9.)

Here the Prophetic design is laid open to us, that while the Son was glorified "with the glory which He

† John 1. and Ephes. 3. 9.

‡ Ps. 40. Heb. 10. 6.

had with the Father before the world was," (John 17.) the wondrous plan of human redemption was pre-determined ;—the means by which man was again to be elected into God's favour, if repentant and believing, was predestined ; and the decree of divine compassion then " secret to us," was prepared to be made manifest in the fulness of time. " But now," declares St. Paul, " is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." (Rom. 16. 26.) In these Holy Scriptures which have been " written for our learning," we read this " great and precious" truth which no human wisdom nor intellect could have attained, that "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" (John 3. 16.) *Here is the great Gospel Covenant, predestined forgiveness to "whosoever believeth !"* " Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5. 1.) " Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1. John 4. 10.) " And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1. John 2. 2.) Thus is explained the pregnant reasoning of St. Paul, " As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1. Cor. 15. 22.) " As by one man sin entered into the world, and death

by sin ; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned :—As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation ;—even so by the Righteousness of One, the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life ;—As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." (Rom. 5.) And That One, "Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 5.) For it is written, "Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4. 12.) "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name *whosoever believeth in Him*, shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10. 43.) "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him. (Ps. 49. 7.)

Thus does the apostle forcibly declare man's original sin and condemnation foreseen in Adam, and the predestined means of reconciliation and justification in Christ, and in Him only, and on the one covenanted condition of faith in His atoning sacrifice. Human merit, we perceive, as a claim to be reinstated in God's favor, there could be none, for the world was then uncreated ; and when created there was revealed to us the lesson, that man's perfect obedience is no more than the service strictly *due* to his Creator, like that of earthly servant and master (see the Parable, Luke 17. 9), and that "when we have done *all things that are required of us*, we yet remain *unprofitable servants* ;" so that imperfect and sinning as

all men are, *falling short of* the honor and glory of God, and consequently remaining under condemnation, it *could* only have been by the propitiation of a Divine Being owing no duty, and Himself *without* sin, "The Lamb without spot or blemish,"—"The just for the unjust,"—that the sin of mankind could be expiated, and forgiveness purchased. St. Paul's energy is devoted to the task of convincing those of sin, who with Pharisaical observances "going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God," (Rom. 10, 3) and in showing, that although "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," yet that human virtues however excellent, *and indispensable as an evidence* of Faith, and as such "pleasing in God's sight," (see the 12th Article) do not, and cannot form the ground work of man's Justification.* They are the graceful superstructure of which faith is the indispensable foundation; the goodly fruit which shows the true quality of the Tree.

* Erroneous views on the doctrine of Justification by Faith only, and not by works, may be instanced, like the doctrine of Particular Election, as one more proof of the waywardness of man in wresting Scripture from its purpose, and dimming its purity with the clouds of human invention, the wisdom of this world. Undoubtedly nothing can be more clear and distinct than the lessons enforced upon the Jews by St. Paul, that their works, their self righteousness, their "having Abraham to their Father," their hollow and heartless observance of the Mosaic law, in which they pridefully trusted, could not save them from condemnation, and hence, too possibly, many an inconsiderate or self deceived soul may have been lulled into false and fatal security, by a few single and ill under-

Thus it is that "We are accounted righteous before God," as the 11th Article scripturally declares "only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings." If the Apostles, gifted as they were, dared not boast, how shall we so far presume? "We dare not," writes St. Paul, "make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (2 Cor. 10, 12.) Whosoever *in deed and in truth believes* in God, *must* love Him, with heart and mind and soul, and so loving must, as the natural habit of the mind so acquired,

stood texts to be found in St. Paul's epistles. But that it administers to human apathy and infirmity, "the folding of the hands to sleep," and the unwillingness to forego sinful indulgences, it would seem impossible that men should yield to such a misconstruction of an *Apostle's* words, as to conceive that profession without practice, Faith without the fruits of Faith, *could* be pleasing in His sight who bids us "Not to be weary in well doing," (Gal. 6, 9) but to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15, 58.) To what purpose are His commandments, and His Holy and benign precepts made known to us if not to be obeyed? And who should obey them, but those who profess faith in Him who so ordains? We are truly said to be saved by Faith only, and why? Because without such *consecrating motive* for our thoughts and actions, unless what we do is done, as commanded, "for the honor and glory of God," and in conformity with His will, with the desire to please Him, and not to foster our own self estimation or for the world's praise, how are we *His* servants, or "what thank have we?" (Luke 6, 32.) Who more forcibly than St. Paul explains the necessity of works, as the *proof* and *result* of real Faith? "Though I have all Faith," he writes, "so that I could remove mountains

seek to please Him in the exercise of every Christian virtue He commands. And He, abounding in goodness, rewards even the cup of cold water thus given in His name, and of which faith in His word, is the actuating *motive*. But to be *self* justified we must not only be perfect, but *self* perfect and *unaided*. Is this so? "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it." (1 Cor. 4, 7.) "In the good things that we do," observes the learned Hooker, "how many defects are there intermingled. There is no man's case so dangerous as his, whom Satan hath persuaded

and have not Charity, *I am nothing*. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me *nothing*." (1 Cor. 1, 13.) What then is this Charity of which the Apostle speaks, as so essential and indispensable an accompaniment to Faith? Thus he describes it: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not; Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." Charity then, is Faith shown in thought, word, and deed—a pervading spirit of peace, good will towards man, disposing the mind to be "kindly affectioned," to "love one another as God has first loved us." It is because "love worketh no ill to his neighbour" that "love is the fulfilling of the law." "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye *do* them." But no real christian can value himself for his imperfect doings, even for one instant. He knows to whom he owes all things, "the will to think and to do," and gives God the glory; and sensible of his own insufficiency, casts himself in heart and spirit on that sufficiency which is of God. (2 Cor. 3, 5.)

that his own righteousness shall present him pure and blameless in the sight of God."

So therefore as the remission of the penalty which inevitably follows sin, original or actual, could by no possibility be attributable to the righteousness of a then non-existent, nor since existing race of men, God's preordained Covenant of forgiveness, is emphatically spoken of as the Covenant of *Grace*. It is, as we have seen, of God's own free will and bounty, that a way is opened to us of pardon and undeserved favor; and it is because this fore-appointed way is of His own pure election, not ours, that those among mankind who hearing God's holy word believe, and believing place their true faith in His blessed Son, and act according to the precepts which that faith enjoins, are called by the Apostle "The elect of God," the "chosen in (or through) Christ." So elect and so chosen, not for themselves, but according to the condition of a covenant open to all men, equally and universally—to "whosoever believeth"—without preference or distinction of persons, age, or nation. "For God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and (as a consequence) worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." (Acts 10, 34.) "There is no difference," declares St. Paul. "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, *is unto all, and upon all them that believe.*" (Rom. 3, 22.)

We should omit a most important consideration as connected with our subject, if, having contemplated in

deep deference and thankfulness of heart, God the Father as predetermining, and God the Son in divine love fulfilling, we failed to reflect, that the counsels of the Most High must have remained sealed to human conception, and still "secret to us," but for the revelation made to mankind by God the Holy Ghost, "Who spake by the Prophets," and by whose inspiration and influence the divine unity of purpose in man's salvation is perfected, and through Him only. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. 12, 3.) "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of *the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John 3, 5.) "It is expedient for you," teaches our Saviour in another place, "that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you." "When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." (John 16.) "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14, 26.) And how mightily was that coming of the Holy Ghost manifested a few days after our Saviour's ascension by the miraculous gift of tongues, followed by the conversion of about 3,000 souls, on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2, 41.)

Having thus briefly, but, as I trust, plainly and Scripturally, traced the natural connection of Foreknowledge and Original Sin, Predestination and Election, we will

proceed to examine how these points have been dealt with by others, and endeavour to remove the obscurities with which the subject has been surrounded.

It is no more than becoming, at least in members of the Church of England, to consult in all doctrinal difficulties the view which has been taken by grave and responsible Ministers and Stewards of God's word, of such passages in Holy Scripture as are, or appear to be, "hard to be understood." It is true that no man is infallible, nor any number of men, and it is moreover the corner stone of Protestantism, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation." (See 6th Article.) But there was, undoubtedly, the application of so much sound wisdom, circumspection, and piety in drawing up the Articles of our Church, in times of great difficulty, that we should be inexcusable in refusing to profit by this admirable compendium of doctrinal points.

I propose therefore to state, 1st the 17th Article, which treateth of Predestination and Election; 2ndly, the Scriptural authority selected by the Church in its support; and 3rdly, as I hope, to show that neither Holy Scripture, nor the Church of England, sanction Calvinistic interpretation.

17TH ARTICLE.

“ Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He had constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them, by Christ, to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honor. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called, according to God’s purpose, by His spirit working in due season, they through grace obey the calling : they be justified freely : they be made sons of God by adoption : they be made like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ : they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.”

We have here the leading paragraph of the 17th Article, which has been claimed both by Romanists and Calvinists as favoring their respective views. Singularly enough, if it were not every day’s experience, upon what apparently uncongenial aliment preconception of the mind may be fostered.

I now present for convenient reference, the marginal texts given in Bishop Mant’s Prayer Book, in quarto, published by authority :—

“ Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”—Matt. 25, 34.

“ According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him, in love : having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”
—Ephesians 1, 4.

“ Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”—2nd Tim. 1, 9.

“ For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”—Gal. 3, 10.

“ Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”
—1st Peter, 1, 2.

“ For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate them He also called ; and whom He called, them He also justified ; and whom He justified, them he also glorified.”—Rom. 8, 29-30.

“ In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace,”—Ephes. 1, 7.

“ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”—Gal. 4, 4.

“ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”—Ephes. 1, 11.

“ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”—Ephes. 2, 10.

“ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.”—1st Peter 1, 3.

Having thus quoted the texts referred to by the Church, it will be useful to add the concluding paragraph of the Article itself, as showing the temper of mind in which we should consult these Scriptural passages.

“ Furthermore we must receive God’s promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture ; and in our doings, *that* will of God is to be

followed which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God."

The Marginal Texts by which this paragraph is supported, are as follows:—

"God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3, 16.

"Who (God) will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave Himself a *ransom for all*, to be testified in due time."—1st Tim. 2, 4.

"And behold a certain lawyer stood up and tempted Him, saying, Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said, What is written in the Law, how readest thou? And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live."—Luke 10, 25.

These are the passages in Holy Scripture expressly pointed out for our general guidance and instruction. They breathe the mild, pure, and merciful truths of Christianity, in perfect consonance with the whole tone and tenor of the Bible throughout. We here learn that

“ *Whosoever* believeth shall not perish;” that “ God would have *all* men to be saved;” that Christ died *for all*, “ Gave Himself a ransom *for all* ;”—*all who believe in Him* :” and that “ He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” And this broad and plain view of the mystery of Predestination and Election, will, I trust, be found to be only more fully proved as we proceed to examine more closely and copiously the ‘ Divine rule of faith ’ which the Bible presents to our study. The moment we quit that pure and only source of true knowledge, light, and life, to wander amid the mazes of human theory and conjecture, that moment all becomes dark, doubtful, and difficult—all weariness and vexation of spirit. Proof of this I am now compelled to give, in adverting to the character of Calvinistic interpretation, which, as if loving darkness rather than light, seems to peep askaunt into the Sacred volume, and having snatched a text from the half open page, builds thereon a mystic and cloudy pile of human sophisms, unknown and unthought of during the first three centuries of the Christian Era, and until the time of Augustine.

But, doubtless, great allowances should be made for controversial writers on Divinity, prior to the age of printing. “ Monasteries of some consideration had frequently only a missal.”* Even to those who had access to a com-

* Rev. H. Horne.

plete copy of Holy Scripture, the labour of reference (absolutely essential to a comprehensive view,) in the examination of rolls of manuscript, must have been almost incalculable ; and, though Calvin may not have been involved in this difficulty, he was very far from possessing the facilities of modern times ; and he had, besides, the example of those before him, in dealing rather with the hypotheses of some immediate opponent, than in passing by the wisdom of this world in a calm examination of the wisdom which is from above. From his " Christian Institutes," published in 1535, it would seem, on the most charitable supposition, as if it were a point of piety with him, coloured perhaps by the infirmity of an intolerant and haughty disposition (as grievously shown in burning Servetus) to make the honor and glory of God to consist in supreme and irreversible decrees : as if, while having truly the right to do as He wills with His own, God had not pleased to enlighten us as to the manner in which it delights Him to exercise that will. Calvin maintained, that so far from the Christian covenant being open to all believers, Christ died only for the elect ; using the word elect in a limited and arbitrary sense, which implies the causeless and inexplicable selection of a few sinful men out of the human race, who, without " seeking," or will of their own, are, by the operation of " irresistible grace," made the " predestined " recipients of the inestimable benefit of our Saviour's atonement, and are so *preserved*, equally without volition, or ability to fall ; while that world at large which " God so loved," is

doomed to hopeless "reprobation," that is, eternal destruction. Lest I should appear to be over-stating these opinions, and to be Calvinior Calvino, I give the following extracts from the work referred to.

"Prædestinationem vocamus æternum Dei decretum, quo apud se constitutum habuit, quid de unoquoque homine fieri vellet; non enim pari conditione creantur omnes, sed aliis vita æterna, aliis damnatio æterna, præordinatur." Thus rendered in the English edition:—"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, whereby He had it determined within himself what He willed to become of every man; for all are not created to like estate, *but to some eternal life, and to some eternal damnation is foreappointed.*"—*Christn. Inst. 3rd B. Ch. 21.*

"It is not meet to assign *the preparing unto destruction* to any other thing than to the secret counsel of God."—*Ch. 23.*

"God not only foresaw or suffered, but also *by His own will disposed the fall of the first man.*"—*Ibid.*

"It is certain that the doctrine of salvation is wrongfully set open in common to all men to profit effectually."—*Ch. 22.*

"By outward preaching all men are called to repentance and faith; and yet not to all men is given the spirit of repentance."—*Ibid.*

I refrain from pursuing, in detail, the sophistries he sought to establish. They have rung their own knell at

Geneva, within these late years, in a manner too painful to enlarge upon ; affording proof, it might almost seem, that the fearful and inevitable tendency of the Calvinistic doctrine of supreme and irreversible decrees, as there carried out, is to merge into Unitarianism.

Such being the Calvinistic doctrine of Election and Predestination : Is the Church of England Calvinistic ? Let us, for answer, refer to commentators of the Church on this matter. In Bishop Mant's prayer book, and in his bible, published, alike, under the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, we find, among other names quoted as authority, Bishops Tomline, Burnet, Pearson, Beveridge, and Sherlock ; Doctors Waterland, Hammond, Bennett, Whitby, Parkhurst, Claggett, Wells ; Archdeacon Welchman, Archbishop Tillotson, &c. ; and the conclusion logically to be drawn, I conceive, is, that as the remarks of these commentators, *so admitted and quoted*, are uniformly opposed to Calvinistic interpretation, the Church, in *selecting* such opinions, *sanctions* them. These writers, in the notes referred to, distinctly avow the " abstruse nature of the doctrine as the fruitful source of controversy." They state, " that if understood in a strict and rigid sense, it carries with it a shocking reflection on the goodness of God. That men, in consequence of their free agency, have it in their power to accept or reject the salvation offered ; while God, by His prescience, foresaw who would accept and who would

reject it." That we "cannot conceive that a being of infinite justice and mercy would arbitrarily select out of His rational creatures a determinate number on whom He would bestow the blessing of eternal happiness, while He consigned the rest to eternal punishment;" and that "such an idea of election ought surely to be rejected."

Strong in this preliminary ground work, let us now proceed to Scripture itself. That enquiry cannot be idle which has the honor and glory of God for its object. First, I would observe, that whosoever consults the Bible with only a partial examination of detached portions, is in danger of misleading himself, however innocently and unintentionally. Lest the understanding should be hurried away by insulated passages, it is needful that our conceptions should be disciplined and corrected by a comprehensive reference to Revelation as a whole, and careful recollection of the peculiar circumstances and objects for which portions were written.

With regard to Election and Predestination, we should remember, for instance, that St. Paul had a difficult, but distinct task before him, and it is a forgetfulness of the nature of this task which has led to error, and misconception of his teaching.* Peculiarly and especially

* The Rev. Hartwell Horne, in his admirable work "An Introduction to the Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures," published by him when a layman, advises that at least the first eleven chapters of the Epistle to the Romans should be read consecutively, that St. Paul's arguments may be duly embraced.

appointed the Apostle to the Gentiles, he had to unfold a divine truth as new to them as it was repugnant to the Jews. His high commission was to make known to "all the world," that God's ancient covenant with Abraham, "in thy seed [our Blessed Saviour] shall *all the nations of the earth* be blessed," was accomplished. He was to preach the "glad tidings which shall be *unto all people*," which had been heralded by an Heavenly Host;—which "filled the Jews with envy,"—but which "the Gentiles heard and were glad." (Acts 13.) He had to explain, that little understood as the predestined election of other nations to equal favor with the Jews might have been, and indeed was, even to the Apostles, as appears from the instructive vision of St. Peter with reference to Cornelius the Gentile (Acts 10. 34), it was no new nor unforeseen purpose of the Divine Mind, but that "before the foundations of the world were laid," God had elected "all the nations of the earth" to like privileges, of His own abounding goodness, and for the sake of His Son, our Saviour. In the words of the article, "God had constantly decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He had chosen in Christ out of mankind"—not chosen out of mankind arbitrarily nor causelessly, but chosen "*in Christ*", that is to say, as believing and trusting in Him who was to be "the way and the life." Thus was the Kingdom of Heaven "opened to all believers" as declared in our Liturgy. And we are said to be "chosen," not as selected partially nor individually, but in contradistinction

to the idea of our being the choosers. "Not that we first loved God, but that God first loved us;" "not for our works," for, as we have seen, neither an unborn world, nor man when created, could have anything to plead, but "according to the good pleasure of His will." Thus St. Paul declares "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation *to every one that believeth*, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" or Gentile world. (Rom. 1, 16.) That this Predestination and Election unto salvation, before the foundation of the world, is applied by him, not to individuals, but to mankind at large, being believers, is forcibly shown in his indignant remonstrance against the selfish jealousy of the Jews, to whose pride and deeply rooted prejudices the idea of other nations sharing with them their supposed exclusive privileges, was intolerable. "Hath not the potter power over the clay," he says, "of the same lump to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor." What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath (the Jews) fitted to destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had *afore prepared* unto glory, *even us* whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles. As He saith also in Osee, "I will call them my people which *were not* my people, and her beloved which was not beloved." (Rom. 9, 21.) Here is the unerring purpose of God pointed out as having come to pass and prophecy fulfilled. Thus

Does the Apostle declare to the Jews the humiliating fact that they are the foreseen "vessels of wrath fitted for, that is deserving, destruction," and that though they had been "endured with much long suffering," the measure of their iniquity was at length full, and visited upon them. They are described as "branches broken off because of unbelief," while the Gentiles are likened to "vessels of mercy afore prepared," and though not hitherto acknowledged as God's people, or His beloved, are now shown to have been predestined from all eternity as equally His people and His beloved, and further pictured as "branches of the wild olive tree grafted, contrary to nature or expectation, into a good olive tree, to partake of its root and fatness." Rom. 9 & 11 Chps. In like manner it will be seen, that it is the Jewish nation whom our Saviour reproaches for their jealousy, and enlightens as to God's mercy to other nations of the earth, (always intended in the expression "Gentiles") in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, who "murmured" because those whom it pleased the master to call at the eleventh hour (the Gentiles, who could not work until called or hired) were made "equal" with those (the Jews), who had entered into agreement for "a penny" early in the morning (of the world.) Matt. 20. Again we read the same lesson in another parable, in which we see the elder brother (the Jewish nation) jealous of mercy and compassion shown to the erring but repentant prodigal son, (the Gentile world.) Luke 15. So also in addressing the Corinthians, St. Paul, I conceive, alludes to the Gentiles

as being in the eyes of the Jews "*the foolish things*" and "*base things*," and "weak things, and things which are despised," yet nevertheless predestined by God, "chosen" to bring to nought (humble the pride of) "things that are" (the Jews), to the end that "no flesh should glory"—as they presumptuously did. And he explains further in Rom. 9 16, that "not him that willeth," as in the pride of self-will, "nor him that runneth," as if the race were always to the swift, or the battle to the strong, not him who vainly glories, like the Pharisee, in "fasting twice in the week, and giving tithes of all he possessed," and so "going about to establish his own righteousness," must necessarily be righteous in the sight of Him who searches the heart, still less that such should be permitted to imagine themselves entitled, *exclusively*, to God's favour, for he adds, in verse 18, that God claims the just right to do what He wills with His own, to "have mercy on whom He will have mercy," that is, even upon the despised Gentile nations, equally with the Jews.

A moment's digression will here, I trust, be permitted me, because in thus noticing the 16th and 18th verses, and showing how little the Calvinist is entitled to claim them in support of arbitrary election, I might, otherwise, be thought to escape, rather than meet, the apparent difficulty of the intermediate verse, if I refrained from remark upon it.

I conceive, then, that wherever passages similar to verse 17 occur in scripture, or such as "the Lord hardened

the heart of Pharaoh," or "whom he will he hardeneth," &c., or which in any other sense or way seem to impute to God the application of his irresistible will in inclining men to evil, or depriving them of the faculty of distinguishing right from wrong, the eye to see, or the ear to hear—such passages, without staying to lay stress upon possible imperfections in translation of words or idiomatic phrases, though these are not the infrequent causes of seeming difficulties,* should be brought by

* NOTE.—I will here cite one example, as having immediate reference to the subject, viz., the 4th verse of Jude, "There are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old *ordained* to this condemnation." Now here the word "*ordained*" gives the appearance of an absolute decree, men *ordained* to condemnation, to be "ungodly, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." But it is difficult to say how the original Greek Προϋγγεγραμμενοι came to be translated "*ordained*." The root Προϋγραψι, it will be readily seen, warrants no such translation, but rather the rendering of Cranmer's bible of 1539, "written afore tyme," as given also in Tyndale's translation, five years previously. Wickliffe, in 1380, uses the same phrase, "Sumtyme bifor writun." In this translation Dr. Whitby concurs. The learned Adam Clarke understands the word to mean *proscribed*, "such as were long ago proscribed and condemned in the most public manner." The heading of the chapter seems to convey the true sense, viz., "False teachers are crept in to seduce—for whose damnable doctrine and manners horrible punishment is prepared." This is precisely as foretold by our Saviour, see Matthew 24, 24, 25, and the parallel passage in Mark 13, 22, 23. Hence we see the erroneous view which may be conveyed by an ill-weighed word. The true reading, undoubtedly, is, not that men were *ordained to condemnation*, but that condemnation was foretold, or afore written, as prepared for certain offences which were foreseen. It was the false teaching which was afore condemned, not the false teachers who were foredoomed; except in the sense that "whoso doeth these things shall surely die."

the christian mind at once to the great test of scriptural revelation on the nature of God's known attributes, and when thus held up to the pure light of a gospel abounding in assurances of his unerring justice and mercy, all that is doubtful will disappear like mists before the effulgence of the sun. We shall see how impossible it is that God should be the author or agent of evil. "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every *good* gift and every *perfect* gift is from above. (Jas. 1, 13.) "Look how wide the east is from the west, so far has he set our sins from us. Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, even so the Lord is merciful unto them that fear him. For he knoweth whereof we are made, he remembereth that we are but dust." Psalm 103.

But while thus resting in perfect conviction that *because* "Judgment is before *Him*, *therefore* we may trust in *Him*," yet we should likewise bear constantly in mind the awful truth, that even God's long suffering and forbearance has a limit. His spirit, He has declared, "shall not always strive with man." (Gen. 6, 3.) He who is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," (Heb. 4, 12) knows when it would be vain to contend longer with man's obduracy, and then, indeed, it is written that man is "given over to his own heart's

lusts, and walks after his own counsels." (Psalm 81.) "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." (Rom. 1, 28.) *Then* may be seen in him the hardening of the heart. The hardening, not of a benificent Creator, but of the Prince of this world, Satan. For as saith St. Paul, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4, 4.) The restraining influence of better and holier thoughts having ceased, their impression left upon the mind becomes more and more faint, until at length effaced altogether, or at least so nearly effaced, that if a compunctious recollection intrude, he only the more "sets his face as a flint" in stiff-necked rebellion.

Not thus, however, does man escape from God's *power*, even when self-excluded from his mercy. Still does omnipotence oppose a barrier beyond which the sinner may not pass, turning the very wickedness of men to the purposes of his own will, and converting it into an instrument for the punishment of evil doers: or, as in the case of Pharaoh, to shew forth and declare that Divine power, which is calculated to bring conviction to generations present and to come. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Psalm 76, 10.)

Now to proceed. To the Thessalonians the like predestined purpose of salvation, through faith, is proclaimed by the Apostles, " God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and *belief of the truth ; whereunto He called you by our Gospel*, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2. Thess. 2, 13.

To Timothy he writes, " Who (God) hath saved us and called us with an Holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2. Tim. 1, 9. Grace is here shown to mean graciousness of purpose, unbought, unmerited mercy, in contradistinction to any claims or merits on man's part, as arrogantly and pharisaically set forth by the Jews.

To the Galatians the same universal truth is stated, " The Scripture forëseeing that God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached, before, the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, *In thee shall all nations be blessed.*" Gal. 3, 8.

Can anything be more universal or less exclusive, than Scriptural Predestination as thus explained by the Apostle to the Jews? For while the Gentiles " hardly believed for joy" the glad tidings, and so required reiterated assurance, that God's equal justice had from eternity comprehended all mankind in the same covenant

of salvation, through Christ, yet to the Jews, was this fact especially and earnestly insisted on. There is an evident and anxious desire throughout his task, to temper the bitterness of their feelings. He could not conceal that the hour of retribution had come upon them, but he strives to convince them, that the participation of the world at large in God's favour was always His predestined purpose, and therefore no addition to their punishment as if it were some new thing. "Brethren my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved, for I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but *not according to knowledge*, for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*" Rom. 10. And Him they had scoffed at, and crucified, and desired that His blood might be upon them and upon their children. But adds the Apostle, "They also, *if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in*, for God is able to graff them in again." Rom. 11.

If it be strange that from materials and passages such as these, the gloomy and fatalist structure of Calvinistic predestination could be raised,—a theory alternating between presumption and despair,—as little ground does there appear to warrant any personal or exclusive application, in the word "Elect," or "Elec-

tion." The word occurs frequently, but no where more strikingly than in the 1st Epistle General of St. Peter, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." In this passage the word Elect which is so much relied upon by some, and which commences the second verse, should, in strictness, be placed in the first. The literal translation from the original Greek, as will in a moment be seen, runs thus, "Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the *elect strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.*" It is immaterial, however, in which verse the course of translation places the word Elect, *it applies*, grammatically and indisputably to "Strangers"—Elect strangers, scattered over various countries, of whom St. Peter could have known nothing except that they were professed converts, or believers in the Gospel, as then promulgated. So far therefore from favouring any view of "particular election," so sweeping an address can but show, that the "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God," are true Christians of all times and nations. He who knows all things, knew that the seed of His word would not be without fruit. "As the rain cometh down and the snow, from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Is. 55.)"

While therefore, "The Gospel of God" is thus "preached freely," and to the whole world, "to all who have ears to hear," declaring that "*The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" (2. Peter, 3.) Should we not "Beware lest any man spoil us through philosophy or vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Col. 2, 8.) And therefore we will now proceed to enquire how the Calvinist is justified in limiting Divine mercy to a certain few as being the "Called," and whether there are grounds for attaching any mysterious sense to that word; any especial and peculiar operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of one man in preference to another? I know of no passage in Scripture that warrants our expectation or belief in such a species of miraculous conversion. It would rather seem a law of Providence, rare in its exceptions, to leave man to the free exercise of the reason with which he is gifted, and the advantage of those divine aids of revelation for the due use of which we are responsible, and which are equally and beneficently open to all. Our Creator, in justifying His ways to man's comprehension, by the mouth of His prophet Isaiah (5 chap.) likens His government of the world to the *completeness* of a Vineyard, *supplied with every thing needful*, and then calls us to our duty by the question, "What could have been done *more* to my Vineyard that I have not done in it. Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" And

the same lesson is taught by our Saviour in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. No supernatural, no unwonted spiritual assistance was permitted to the five brethren of the rich man who were yet on earth, "They have Moses and the Prophets let them hear them," declares our Saviour. (Luke 16.) How therefore can we be justified in looking, individually, for some divine enlightenment beyond that which is given to the humblest, and which we already so abundantly possess in the holy gospel, and in the promised "help" of the Holy Spirit? And yet the Calvinist declares the gospel not to be sufficient. "No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." (John 6, 44.) This scriptural truth all Christians acknowledge, but the controverted question is, *as to the nature of this drawing*, which represents the influence of the Holy Spirit, which is so needful to all, and which every Christian is bidden to pray for, and to hope for. Speaking of this influence on men's mind, Bishop Beveridge explains, that God "draws them, not with force and violence, but as man, as reasonable and free agents, in compliance with, not in opposition to their will." Bishop Hall observes, "*We will freely, we do freely believe, for faith is an act of the will; yea, and we do co-operate with grace; neither are we herein like to senseless stones, as Austin truly speaks.*" So wrote our spiritual guides two centuries since. Going further back into the world's page, we find Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, in 398, thus teaching the same doctrine. "For neither," he declares, "does God lay

any forcible restraint upon the freedom of our understanding nor weaken our free will : rather He *co-operates*, and He affords *assistance* to save : or, *were the whole work of Him, what is to hinder but that all men must be saved.*" Yet further back, thus does the Prophet Hosea (11. chap.) explain the mode in which God exercises His mercy in drawing man. " I drew them with cords of a man, *with bands of love* ; and I was to them, as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and *I laid meat unto them.*" The Calvinist, on the other hand, conceives man's will to be beyond hope of amendment corrupt, so that divine *assistance* in its fullest measure *as assistance*, and if depending ever so little on man's own co-operative power to cry ' Save me, Lord, or I perish,' would be utterly insufficient for salvation. Man's will, it is argued, must be *determined* for him, and his " Call " to repentance must be the act of " Irresistible Grace." And yet if this were so, why should *all* be instructed by St. Peter, " to give diligence to make their calling and election sure." (2 Peter 1, 10.) If the result of *irresistible* grace it must necessarily be " sure," and requiring no assent or co-operation in man's heart. Let us turn for further instruction to the Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son. (Matt. 22.) Here we read that " Them that were bidden (or *called*) to the Wedding," (Heaven) "*would not come.*" " These (the Jews) not being worthy," others (the Gentiles) were bidden, " as many as ye shall find," both bad and good, " out of the highways," and of these, one, not having on a wedding

garment, was cast out. And that to be "called" is not Grace, nor a peculiar invitation, given to the human race, as the calling went, "both to this bidding, the offer of which was resisted, for it was refused by them, and went their ways, one to merchandize," and according to the King "not worthy." So that, unavailing from another cause, namely unfitness, in the example of the wedding, but "had not" is to say, a heart chastened by faith, clothed in the preparation and prepared in love and grace of being guest at such a table of his Lord." Many are called. To be called, therefore, in a gospel invitation, as God calls by His word, and by His appointment by St. Paul, "Whereunto" (2. Thess. 2, 14.) And in I for these alone, (the Apostles) shall believe on me *through* the Apostle writes, "We know for good to them that love called according to His purpose. So that the called are

unconditionally elected or selected, but are here defined to be "them that love God," that is Christian believers, for it is obvious that we must believe before we can love ! And this agrees further with the expression "Called according to His purpose." What purpose ? The salvation of man through faith in Christ ! We learn further, that "Whom God did foreknow (as believers,) He predestined to be conformed to the image of His son." This is His declared and necessary condition. It is necessary to salvation that we should "put off the old man," conforming ourselves to Him our great pattern and example in this life, that we may be made "like unto His glorious body" in the life to come. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Cor. 15.) So those "whom He did predestinate" to reap the fruits of faith on the condition of faith, "them He also called." St. Paul is here explaining the predestined calling and election of the Gentile nations ; but we have already seen in the parable that "calling" is confined to no age nor people, but is the same gracious offer to "both bad and good." Those only are not called, therefore, I conceive, who like the heathen of our day have not yet heard the word of God. "And whom He called, them He also justified," (accepted as justified through their faith in the justification of His son.) "And whom He justified, them He also glorified;" or, by His "great and precious promises," declares shall be glorified.

Earnestly desirous of viewing the opinions of my Christian brethren, with Christian moderation and truth, I am here bound to state, that even the beautiful prayer which opens the 17th chapter of John, has been held as favoring the doctrine of particular calling and election. I cannot see it. I read the first nineteen verses as applying to the Apostles, just as explained in the ordinary heading to that chapter in every Bible. "1, Christ prayeth to His father to glorify Him,—6, to preserve His Apostles,—11, in unity,—17, and truth." And even if the sense were not limited to them, the truth remains the same. We know that God has given to His son "out of the world," every one out of that sinful world *who believes in Him*. In the expression, "I pray not for the world," the scholar knows that the Greek word translated as *world*, may here be properly understood to mean the impious and hardened of the world, rather than the race of man in a general sense, and such must necessarily be the correct signification, for "This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. 1.) Meaning, of course, *repentant* sinners; and because we cannot conceive Christ refusing to pray for those whom He came to save. If confirmation were needed, we have it in the 20th verse, before noticed, "Neither pray I for these alone, (the Apostles,) but *for them also* which shall believe on me through *their* word." While, therefore we learn, that according to the strict *letter* of the Gospel, "*God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain*

salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1. Thess. 5. we may equally rejoice to assure ourselves, that the *spirit* of the Gospel offers no sanction to Calvinistic exclusiveness. One moment's retrospect will be sufficient.

If there be one truth more conspicuously floating on the surface of the mighty stream of Revelation than another, and obvious to the most careless observer, it is God's "tender mercy towards mankind." We behold divine compassion breathing from every page of the sacred volume; the patience and long suffering of the Creator towards rebellious man; unwearied parental entreaty and expostulation; warnings, instructions, and remonstrances again and again renewed;—all having *one object*, to save, and to bless! "Let him that glorieth glory in this; that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jere. 9. 24. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?" (Ezek. 18.) "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezek. 33. 11. "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and *he that hath no money*; come ye, buy and eat—yea come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." "Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear and your soul shall live."

Is. 55. "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea! *they* may forget,—yet will not *I* forget thee." Is. 49. 15.

These are but a few passages from the riches of the Old Testament. In the New Testament we find our Blessed Saviour Himself, saying, "come unto Me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11. 28. Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6. 37. "And ye *will not come* to Me, that ye might have life. (John 5. 40.) "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*." (Mark 16. 15.) "*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. 22. 17.) And lastly, for similar quotations might be multiplied endlessly, we will turn to that pathetic apostrophe so fully bearing on the question of God's mercy, and man's free agency in accepting or rejecting it,—“O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not*.” Matt. 23. 37.

In what way does the Calvinist deal with expressions so affecting, love so benign, invitations to peace and happiness so earnest, and repeated, and undeserved? The Church of England justly holds it, in her 20th Article, to be “not lawful so to expound one place of

Scripture that it be repugnant to another." Do these passages read as if the theological aphorisms of Calvin *could* be true? Man "fore appointed to damnation"—hopeless and helpless—predoomed to eternal misery? *Can* that Gracious Being who thus speaks, "O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever?" (Deut.5.29) Can God so full of loving kindness mock His creatures? Can He who is the God of Truth—spread before us the glories of Heaven which we cannot enter? Does He who knoweth our infirmity, and that without him we can do nothing, does He grant, partially, to one man, the grace which He withholds from another, though equally needful to all,—the consequence of withholding that grace being an inevitable eternity of woe, the terrors of which, though beyond our conception, are known to Him? If passages there are in Holy Writ which suggest in any mind an interpretation so fearful, impossible, and contradictory as this, it were better, and more reasonable and logical, to doubt our right apprehension of such passages, than by adopting them, to set at nought the mass of evidence which makes known to us our Creator's infinite love and goodness, wisdom and unerring justice. Well may the commentators of our Church declare, that such an interpretation carries with it "a shocking reflection on the goodness of God," and that "such an idea of election ought surely to be rejected." Not only is such a creed terrible, and contradictory to every attribute of God, His

sovereignty alone excepted, but it is opposed also to the whole tone and tenor of Scripture. The world, according to such doctrine, ceases to be the state of probation we are taught to consider it, and man can no longer be held an accountable being, if thus the helpless victim of absolute decrees. To be a responsible creature, one who is to give account hereafter before the judgment seat of Christ, for all things done in the body, he must be endued, according to his need, with such sufficient strength, and freedom of will, as will enable him to "choose whom he will serve;" to resolve which master he will hold to, "God or Mammon." An infant plunged from a rock into the boiling surge beneath, would not be more certainly doomed than man amid the turmoil of this world if forsaken of God; having to contend not only against the infirmity which is his birth-right, but also to "wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephes. 6, 12.) When Christ commanded that the Gospel should be preached "to every creature," would not this message of pardon and peace have been really without meaning, if only those *can* hear who are predestined as elect? Who were "these little ones" of whom our Saviour spake, saying, "In Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 18.) Were they not the type of earth's children throughout creation? We are bidden to "take heed that we despise not one of these little ones," and to become *as* little children *in love and obe-*

dience, if we would enter the Kingdom of Heaven. As is the undoubting trustfulness of a child in its earthly parent, so should ours be, who are but "children of a larger growth," in our Heavenly Father. And what is the solemn declaration that follows? "*It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*" So, by divine instruction, declares St. Peter, "The Lord is *not willing* that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2. Peter, 3. If therefore man perishes, it is most clear that it is by his own obstinate unbelief, and *not by the predisposing intent or will of God.*

There are those who have better learnt of their Saviour to be "meek and lowly of heart,"—whose minds more gentle and therefore less dogmatic—more enlarged and therefore more just,—shrink from the grosser tenets of Calvin, but who, dwelling too exclusively on particular texts, and unable to satisfy themselves why, with the same apparent advantages, one man becomes a Christian in spirit and in truth, while another advances not beyond profession, adopt conclusions and conjectures as to the partial and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit upon certain minds, for which not only do I find no authority in holy scripture, but rather learn it to be a matter beyond our intellectual range. The mode or measure in which the Holy Spirit deals with human nature must ever be a mystery. It is admitted that to be "elect" man must believe. But *how* belief is

acquired who shall say? How the heart is touched and awakened from the sleep of death;—how, “being by nature born in sin,” we are “born again” to a new and spiritual existence,—is declared by our Lord himself to pass man’s understanding. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the spirit.” (John 3. 8.) It is vain therefore to ask with Nicodemus, “How can these things be?” The question why men differ in faith, and in degrees of faith, as regards spiritual things, can be but partially answered by an analagous question, affecting things temporal. Why does one man accept and profit by a parent’s or a friend’s counsel in the affairs of this life, while another refuses to “hear counsel or receive instruction?” Why does one man, “wise in his generation as are the children of this world,” devote the energy and strength of youth and manhood, in order that he may find provision and rest in the time of age; while another, like the prodigal son, spends his health and his substance in riotous living, leaving the morrow to care for itself, until recklessness ends in misery? The cases are parallel. In each there are influencing motives, equally applicable and open to adoption. But while one foregoes, in prudent self denial, present advantage for future hope,—as does the Christian,—the other sacrifices the future in blind gratification of the indulgence of the moment. In like manner, and *because of the same freedom given of choice and action*, do men resolve as to the present and future,

not of this existence only, but of that which is to come. Marvellous indeed it is, that the "foolish things" of this world, its dross and tinsel, should prove so engrossing and beguiling, as to dim the glories of a Christian's hope. But it has *ever* been so. Even the brute creation are man's reproach, as shown by Isaiah (1. 3.), "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib"—these ungifted animals have sense to know their benefactor—"but Israel doth *not* know, My people doth *not* consider." Yet *man's perversity* is surely not a ground on which to doubt for an instant *God's equity*. Strong and explicit indeed should be scriptural proof, before we presume to impute partiality to God, and impugn His justice; He who declares justice to be His attribute, and "righteousness and judgment the habitation of His throne." "There is no God else beside Me, a just God and a Saviour." Is. 45. "Are not My ways equal?" (Ezek. 18.) "Great and marvellous are Thy works Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways." Rev. 15. 3. Even when our Saviour was on earth, were there not those who believed, and many who believed not, tho' never man spake as He spake? How should it be otherwise now—man still being left, as then, to embrace or refuse that Saviour's mercy? It is precisely because the will is left in responsible freedom, that men decide differently, else must all think alike, or all not be equally dealt with, though alike brought to judgment. The Jews *would* have believed, and Adam would *not* have fallen, had it pleased God to over-rule His creatures. "When we have searched all

the reasons imaginable, writes Bishop Beveridge, why men do not fully subject themselves to the obedience of the Gospel, they will all resolve and empty themselves into this, that they will not because they will not." He further observes, " God vouchsafes to call some with His own mouth. Thus He called Abraham, Moses, and several of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament. God calls *all mankind* by His works, and Providence. All the creatures in the world, are as so many tongues declaring the wisdom, power, goodness, and glory of God unto us, and so call upon us to praise, honor and obey Him. God hath called many by the ministry of His word, and of His servants the Prophets, the Apostles, and their successors, declaring it, and explaining it to them." In like manner, remarks Bishop Hall, " There is not one son of Adam, to whom God hath not promised, that if he shall believe in Christ, repent, and persevere, he shall be saved."

But however mysterious is the entrance of thought into the heart, we are at no loss to define clearly the *source* of those thoughts when there. " By their fruits ye shall know them." If tending to good we at once recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit, from whom we know do proceed " all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works." If evil, we know, as surely, that our subtle enemy is within. " A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Between the motives for a Christian life thus breathed into us, by the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit; and the temptations to yield to self indulgence,

and the allurements laid before us in specious guise by our arch adversary the devil, we have the daily duty of deciding. It is the essential principle of *probation*, that there should be this trial of our faith and constancy, and equally an essential principle of *responsibility*, that our decision should be left free, though not unaided. And man's will is not less free, because it is acted upon by holy, as well as unholy, influences, so that the power of distinguishing, and determining between good and evil, thus placed in just equipoise before us, is left *uncontrolled*. "Of the earth earthy," and *prone* to sin, tempted hourly by the thousand delusions of a wily enemy, we should undoubtedly yield ourselves up to a blind and sensual enjoyment of time present, and forego all nobler aspirations after the promised glories of eternity, but for the mighty aid of God's grace, freely and sufficiently given. He suffers not that we should be tempted above that we are able. It is the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, which teaches us to comprehend our danger and our hopes, and to understand the result of our actions in this life, as involving eternal happiness, or eternal misery after death. When therefore man "hears the word with joy," and believes in God and in His gracious promises, it is most true, that even a choice so beneficial is not adopted, without the previous and indispensable aid of the Holy Spirit, "helping our infirmities," Most true also, that in preferring eternal bliss to eternal woe, we have nothing whereof *to boast*, but there is evidently no compulsion on the part of the Creator towards us His creatures, no compelling

no 'irresistible grace.' The power to reject even hopes so sublime, is always left to mankind, and must be so left or responsibility ceases. It is written, "Abraham believed in the Lord, and He *counted it to him for righteousness.*" Gen. 15. 6. St. Paul remarks upon this passage, "now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for *us* also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. 4, 23.) Now how could faith be imputed, either to Abraham or to us, as righteousness, if faith were the result only of God's over-ruling and irresistible grace, in which man's will had neither choice, power, or co-operation? Nay, does not every one too consciously feel, that the power to swerve from the straight path of duty, and thus to "grieve the Holy Spirit," is not only always within us, but ever requiring prayer, self examination and strength not our own, to assist our feeble efforts to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God?" God has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He is long suffering and of great goodness, and interposes often, when we know it not, between us and the deadly purpose of our spiritual enemy. "Simon, Simon," said our Saviour to the unconscious Peter, "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.*" (Luke 22.) So in like manner may we trust, that the same great "Mediator and Advocate," who laid down His life for us men and for our salvation,

does and will pray for us in our hour of need, though we perceive not the hand that saves, nor the "Angel standing in the way" between us and destruction.

But, though God will not forsake us, we have ever *the power*, if we have the will, to forsake Him. Those who think they stand, have to the latest hour of their earthly trial and probation, the same need to "take heed lest they fall." The "Crown of life" is promised to those who "*faint not*"—who are "faithful unto death"—who "*continue in the faith.*" "*If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to (or for,) every creature which is under Heaven; whereof I, Paul, am made a Minister.*" (Col. 1, 23.) Aye, though the history of past generations of man abounds in wondrous proof, that God is indeed "long suffering in goodness," and that He "willeth not the death of a sinner," yet is there also in the same Divine record, fearful evidence that "God is not mocked." He has said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." There is an accepted time, but the day of grace past, then comes inevitable retribution. The doom of the primeval world was an awful lesson. Scarcely less remarkable is that of the Jews, who long upheld as a chosen people, a nation of priests, to be an example and instruction, have been signally punished for their unbelief and cast out of God's favor. "Behold their house is left unto them desolate," as God afore declared unto Moses, so it came to pass. "And

the Lord said unto Moses, *this people will forsake Me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them.*" Deut. 31.

"Once in a state of grace, always in a state of grace," or the doctrine of "perseverance," as it is called, does not seem therefore a theological dogma borne out by scripture. (See our 16th Article.) Turning to the 18th and 33rd chapters of Ezekiel, we have further instruction to the contrary, as distinct as words can make it—"Behold all souls are Mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine, the soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him. But when *the righteous turneth away from his righteousness* and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die." Thus was the kingdom of Israel

“rent away” from Saul because he became disobedient.* And Eli also was cut off and his race, “because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.”

1. Sam. 3, 13. “I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before Me for ever : but now the Lord saith, be it far from Me, for them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 1. Sam. 2, 30.

I would here remark, further, that though the Jews were a peculiar and favored people, during a certain period of the world's history, yet we should take heed how we attach the idea of injustice or partiality to God, in so selecting and directing them, as if it had been for their own sakes only, and in preference to, and to the exclusion of others. As time and the decrees of Providence matured, we are now sensible, on the contrary, that it was the Divine purpose, from the foundation of the world, that “All the nations of the earth,” should form one fold under one shepherd. I conceive that the Jews are to be viewed simply as instruments in the hand of God, for his foreseen purposes. “To them were committed the oracles of God.” They were to the spiritual world, what the sun is to the physical world, the assigned channel of light, and especially of *That Light* which in the fulness of time,

* Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being King. 1. Sam. 15, 23.

was to "lighten the Gentiles,"—our Blessed Saviour,—according to the promise given to Eve, and the after covenant with Abraham. They were "highly favored" among men, just as Mary was "highly favored among women," and for a like universal, not personal or limited cause. There is a wide distinction moreover to be drawn between the passing interests of time, and the momentous issues of eternity. The "good things" of this world are not always given to the good. On the contrary, its pride and pomp and passing glories, are as naught in God's sight; so that what assumes an appearance, to superficial observation, of favor on the part of Providence, must not too hastily be so understood by the grave enquirer. "What shall be the End?" That is the important test. When "Judgment" is to have place, there is no longer a shadow, even, of favour, betokened from one end of the Scripture to the other. When the awful sentence of Eternity is to be passed, we see that Jew or Gentile, the high things of this world or the lowliest, are held as equal in His sight in whose hands we are—in whom we live and move and have our being. He is no respecter of persons, nor of nations.

I urge this to show, that the Calvinistic view of arbitrary decrees, and partial or particular Election, can draw no strength from the setting apart of the Jews as a peculiar people; from the precedence granted to Jacob over his twin brother Esau; Isaac over Ishmael; nor such other examples. Whatever temporal advantage

may appear to have been given to particular individuals in Scripture history, will prove on reflection to have been but *temporal*, as regarded themselves, and not tending to shut out one human soul from the immortal interests of Futurity, but rather will appear to have been conferred, as a means of proclaiming those interests more certainly, and keeping alive their knowledge among the generations of men. If "God left not Himself without witness" on earth, it was not for the sake of that witness only, nor to be viewed as some partial honor granted to some Elect human beings from time to time, but that His own blessed name and goodness might be made known from age to age, and for the salvation of all, not for the exclusive benefit of a few.

Bringing home to ourselves these great lessons, graven as they are in the history of the past, we shall see, that as in the Old Covenant God left man's will free to perform its conditions, and rejoice in its blessings, or not; so in the new, or Christian Covenant, we have, placed before us in Divine munificence, "great and precious promises," also on condition,—the single condition, of faith! Not an idle, theoretic, and *dead* faith, but a living faith which worketh by love, bringing forth the fruits which are the test of its truth. When our Saviour said "*Only believe*," He who knew all things knew that *real* belief, a *real* heartfelt conviction of the truth of God's holy word, would, as surely as effect follows cause, lead to a ready, willing, grateful earnestness of

desire to do that which is pleasing in His sight, to whom we owe every thing,—our life, our preservation, and each hour's undeserved blessing vouchsafed to us,—with the crowning blessing of all, an Eternal Sabbath of peace and rest, and bliss, when the six days' labor of our earthly pilgrimage, our forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, is accomplished, and the bright dawn of Eternity arises from amid the shadows of death, disclosing to our view the Promised Land.

Every living soul therefore being thus explicitly invited, *tempted* if I may so say, to believe in God, *must* have *power* given him to believe, or the condition, and the encouragement of the most lofty inducements, were but inconceivable cruelty and delusion. And this holy assistance must be adapted to every man's need of it, or we doubt Divine wisdom and justice.

Nevertheless, though I conceive that Holy Scripture does not sanction the expectation in any human mind of any supernatural *call*, any greater degree of favor or assistance, than is given to all men liberally, to enable them to determine whom they will serve, The Lord, or Baal;—although while man is “halting between two opinions,” he is unwarranted in looking for more than a *sufficiency* of Divine grace, to counteract, *not over rule*, evil influence in his nature; yet, it is no impeachment of immutable justice to trust, as I believe we may most

scripturally trust, that when man *has* "chosen the better part," (Luke 10, 42,)—when he "considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed,"—when he has said, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord," (Josh. 24, 15,) "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief," (Mark 9, 24,) *then* the heart, purified by repentance, does become more holily, happily, and habitually influenced and strengthened, as "the temple of the Holy Ghost." (See 1. Cor. 6, 19.) And I believe in this sense it may be understood of the Holy Spirit, "Whoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." (Matt. 13, 12.) "God giveth not the spirit by measure," (John 3, 34,) to His servants.

That varied measures of grace may in such manner be granted to all sorts and conditions of men, being christians indeed, is very different in principle, it will be perceived, from the idea of partiality or favor predestined from eternity to men, *before* they have acknowledged that "the Lord He is God," and by becoming Christians, have, as may be said, the title of subjects to the protection and bounty of their King. To one man ten talents may be committed (perhaps for special purpose); to the stewardship of another, five; to another, one. *One*, therefore, *all* have. No instance is held out to our conception, of man left without one talent, proportioned to his capacity for its due use and employment. And these ten talents, or five, may mean greater portions or measures

of God's Holy Spirit, such as we observe in men of pre-eminent piety and constancy under trial, as truly as they may signify power, wealth, intellect, or other means of benefitting our fellow men; *responsibility alike attaching to every* gift of God. But when the end cometh, whatever may have been the measure of grace, the measure of *justice* to every living soul, will be such as a Divine knowledge even of our very thoughts, will render perfect. It is written, "To whom much is given, from them will much be required." (Luke 12, 48.) And again, "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2. Cor. 8, 12.) It is a fearful consideration, in what manner the soul, when summoned from its earthly trial, will be able to answer, as it *must* answer, for the deeds done in the body, before the judgment-seat of Him, from whom no secrets are hid! That Judge knoweth His own; those who in this world have acknowledged Him before men—have sought to acquaint themselves with His Word and Will—and who, in contemplating His purity and perfection, have learnt to know their own sinful imperfections, and so to trust *solely*, and with their whole soul, in His truth and love for justification. Equally sure is it, that He knoweth those also, who have *not* known Him, nor sought to know Him, though they have had the means, who have "thought scorn of that pleasant land, and given no credence to His word." What power of imagination *can* picture in its real and terrible truth, the self condemnation, unavailing remorse, and endless despair,

of the self convicted unbeliever in the presence of Christ ? Into that presence, nevertheless, ALL must come, unbelievers or believers !

It is no impeachment of God's mercy or foreknowledge, that " some did not believe." For " What if some did not believe," writes St. Paul, " shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect ? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance ? God forbid, for then how shall God *judge* the world ?" (Rom. 3, 3.) How, indeed ! It would not have been *equal* justice had it pleased God to suspend creation, because He foreknew that part of His creation would live in vain, and die, self condemned, in wilful unbelief. The glorious inheritance predestined, through God's grace, for Christian believers, would in such case have been forfeited to them, not by their own rejection of that grace offered, but through the refusal of others. They who love the world, and live for the world, verily " have their reward" in the world they have preferred. Shall this *their* free choice debar the Christian from the fruition of *his* faith ? He is bidden to " love *not* the world," but to lay up his treasures, and set his affections, upon a world to come. In this faith he resigns things seen, if forbidden things, for that which is unseen ; things temporal for things eternal. He believes in God and in His word, holy and true, and shall this man's faith be vain because some there are, some there have been, and may be again, who equally having eyes to see, see not—ears to hear, and hear not ? Surely not ! We

may suffer *temporally*, for others' wickedness. "It is impossible but that offences must come," man being a responsible, and therefore a free agent. Tares must grow with the wheat, but at length cometh the time of harvest, and the humblest Christian is secure in his trust, even though a world, as in the days of Noah, were bent on self destruction. His is "a joy with which a stranger intermeddleth not, which no man taketh, nor can take away." It is because God is *just*, as well as merciful, that those who believe in Him "shall not perish but have everlasting life." "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" (Job 4, 17.) What an answer to Calvinistic Election is contained in that single question! It deserves to be well weighed. And can we forget the abounding pity and love, conveyed in the Divine assurance, that "There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine that need no repentance,"—(Luke 15, 7.)—if, indeed, such could be found. How utterly contradictory, again, is this sentence from our Saviour's lips, to the absolute and personal predestination of Calvinism. For who does not see, that if a certain few were predestined as the Elect, through the irresistible operation of a divine and eternal decree, there *could* be no joy in Heaven—no benign solicitude and interest as to lost man, or the rescue of one immortal soul from everlasting misery; because those *fore appointed* or elected to happiness, from the foundation of the world, would fulfil their destiny, just as the Sun rises and sets, or any other elemental process of nature obeys God's command.

But does not the Omniscient then foresee, how each man, in the freedom given to him, will exercise that freedom? Most surely. But to foreknow, and to fore-appoint a result, are widely and materially distinct. God foreknew that Abraham would believe in the promises made to him, but his faith could not have been fore-appointed or it would not and could not have been "counted unto him for righteousness." And had he not thus believed would the purposes of God have been counteracted? Most certainly not. His mercy would have found another channel, as surely as the mountain stream finds its fitting way to the distant ocean. But Abraham, if unfaithful, would not have been that channel. This is clear, because we find in Scripture the distinct reason assigned, *why* it pleased God to bring these things upon Abraham, viz., his foreseen faith and consequent obedience. "FOR I know him, that he *will* command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord *may* bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. 18, 19.) If the mind involuntarily wanders to the question—how is it with those who (like too many of our own nation, and millions in others,) have *not* heard God's Holy Word, and so have not been "called;" the strict answer would be, the same which reproved the enquiry of Peter in a matter not affecting *his own* salvation: "What is that to thee, follow *thou* me." (John 21, 22.) But though it is indeed presumptuous to "judge another man's

servant," St. Paul has thrown light upon a subject which needed no more than our own ample knowledge of God's infinite goodness. He writes, "When the Gentiles, [Heathens] which have not the law, *do by nature* the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves : which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing." Rom. 2, 14. "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." Rom. 5, 13. "Where no law is there is no transgression." Rom. 4, 15. Hence we learn that there is a sense of right and wrong inherent in every heart ; and the English translation, therefore, of that portion of the Ninth Article. "*very far gone* from original righteousness," seems more scrupulously just than the "*Quam longissime*" of the original. We may further reason thus : that as it cannot be for man to give or to withhold the eternal happiness of another, no little child shall suffer everlastingly, for its parents' neglect in training it in the due "nurture and admonition of the Lord ;"—no congregation will be doomed to "the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched," through their minister's errors or omissions ;—no nation on which the light of the Gospel has not yet shined, will be "as the beasts that perish," because Christian Kingdoms have disregarded the divine precept, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." God's foreknowledge as to the determinations of the human mind, which, like the

ocean tide, He leaves free to go "thus far and no farther," we have already observed in the prophetic instance of the Jews, "This people will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them." Deut. 31, 16. He foreknows, therefore, in all and every conceivable case, what *would* be the effect upon every mind, whether child, congregation, or people, if Christian parents, ministers, or nations fulfilled, respectively, the bounden duties of the stations in which Providence has placed them. We are all responsible in such, or any other matters, for neglect in doing that which ought not to be left undone; and the *temporal* happiness and peace of individuals, and of kingdoms, must undoubtedly suffer from such neglect in so important a matter,* but eternal happiness or misery it is for God alone to award. We may "kill the body," but we "cannot kill the soul." "Judgment is before Him, *therefore* trust thou in Him."

* The public mind is fast arriving at the sound and wholesome conviction, that not Education only, but Religious Education, is the alone bond which can hold together the social system and preserve the community in safety and order. Where religion fails, as in the waywardness of the world it sometimes will, to guide men in the ways of pleasantness and the paths of peace, we may be assured that no control *less* divine, no inducements or motives *less* pure and lofty, will stand one moment in the hour of temptation before the tide of earthly passions and interests. Too long has it been a successful device of the devil to substitute a *wrong motive for right dealing*; by putting into men's mouths "*honor*" as their watchword and ruling principle; *self* worship instead of the worship and obedience due unto God. Too long have mankind been wont to consider what becomes them as "men of honor,"—what the judgment of their fellow man will be, (like false worshippers before a golden calf,)

Job 35, 14. Clear and remarkable is the view opened to us on this question by our Saviour himself. "Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida, for if the mighty works which were done in you *had been done* in Tyre and Sidon, *they would have repented* long ago in sackcloth and ashes." "And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, *it would have remained* unto this day." Matthew 11, 21. How distinctly is divine knowledge not only of what *is*, but of *what would have been*, the sure effect of certain causes, manifested in this declaration. And mark farther: It was not fitting that the events of Providence should be hastened in their course because of the crimes of this or that city. The predestined period of our blessed Saviour's appearance on earth had not arrived. Those cities having reached that climax of wickedness which passes even Divine forbearance, were signally destroyed as an example to others. But weigh well what He who is to be the judge of all men ("For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son,") has declared respecting them—"It shall be *more tolerable* in the day of judgment" (Matt. 11, 22,) for

instead of asking themselves what is their duty *as Christians*, and with what judgment they will be judged by Him, their Lord and King, whose servants and subjects they nominally are, but whose standard they have forsaken, and whose homage they have transferred to the Prince of this world, Satan. Why exchange the guidance of Gospel light for the false and flickering ignis fatuus of erring beings like ourselves?

those cities which would have repented, but had not the miracles of Christ as a means to save, or as witness against them, than for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, who, having unwonted advantages, *disregarded* them. In like manner we may be fully assured, that every soul in every nation, and of every period of the world, will be judged with omniscient discrimination and divine knowledge of what *would have been* each individual soul's obedience, under more favorable circumstances of Christian position, instruction and privileges.

But far, immeasurably above all other views of the impartial and *immutable* character of God's justice, would stand the one pre-eminent sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, could we duly conceive the immensity of that sacrifice, or the awful and inevitable reality of that judgment which is thus shown to follow sin. We know that the "one oblation of himself once offered" in satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, was predestined in love before the world was,—foreshadowed in type and prophecy for ages, and fulfilled in agony on the cross at Calvary ;—that "He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities,—the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." But who can approach, in its full truth, the sorrow and acquaintance with grief borne by that divine mind when taking our nature upon Him, He visited in earthly form the earth He had made ;—He came to His own, and His own received Him not,—and He endured for us men, and

for our example, the ingratitude and reviling, the hardness of heart and obstinate unbelief of all around Him:—"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4, 15.) Closing such a life by such a death! How abhorrent in God's sight must be human wickedness to render indispensable such an expiation. "The sins of the whole world" were then concentrated on that devoted head, and scarcely could even He sustain the burden and imputed contamination. "Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." If ever justice could have been moved to stay the sword, it must surely have been in answer to prayer from those pure lips, breathed in fervour and agony of spirit, attested by drops of blood bursting from the pores of his mortal frame. But it was written that "so it must be,"—"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." (Matt. 5, 18.) Mercy was indeed shown, but it was in stedfastly exacting that great penalty which was to be the price of man's redemption. A little moment was the Father's face hidden even from the Son, for "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." (Hab. 13.) "And the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Is. 53, 6.) "He *hath* poured out His soul unto death and made intercession for the transgressors." (Is. 53.) Written in the blood of our Saviour are His own dying words, "*It is finished.*" I confess it does most forcibly appear to me, that with proof so undeniable and manifest before us of the *immutable and unerring* nature of God's justice, it seems

impossible to entertain a doubt as to the clear and unimpeachable equity of God's dealings with man, in every conceivable case or circumstance; or that we can safely permit ourselves to wander among human theories, like that of Particular Election, which cannot be true unless God be unjust instead of just, partial instead of impartial. "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants, and *none of them that trust in Him* shall be desolate." Psalm 34, 22. "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." John 6, 47. Is there not comfort enough in knowing this, and encouragement sufficient for every practical purpose, without seeking the dangerous, and as I believe delusive, excitement of the imagination, as to personal election and partial favor, or risking the equally fatal despair in humbler minds, which may well result from a conscientious difficulty in realizing such especial grace and intervention? "If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ's even so are we Christ's." "Not he that commendeth himself is approved but whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor. 10. Let no man, therefore, I would urge, sanguine of temperament, but of undisciplined understanding, trifle with the insidious approaches of spiritual pride, by fostering undue and unscriptural conceptions of the nature of Election. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly." Rom. 12, 3.

And let no one, of more anxious and humble character, "meek and lowly of heart," despond in groundless apprehension, lest God should have forgotten to be gracious. "For the Lord is *loving unto every man*, and His mercy is over all his works." (Ps. 145, 9.) "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God. Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12, 6.) "Whosoever shall confess Me before men," declares our Redeemer, "him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 10.) "All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me." [The Father giveth to the Son "*whosoever believeth in him*."] "And him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." (John 6, 37.) "Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." Heb. 12, 12.

"Every man," writes the Rev. J. Hare, "without respect of persons, I apprehend to be so far an Elect of God, by the act of Baptism, that by virtue of this sacrament, he becomes a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven; and ever continues so, *if to the best of his power*, he complies with the stipulated conditions of this rite, which requires him to believe in the Divine Mission of Jesus Christ, and to lead a virtuous and pious life. But if by a contrary conduct, he violates these stipulated conditions, he ceases to be an Elect of God, because no man who does not

love, honor, and obey God, or at least *does not heartily set his mind to do so*, can pretend to any holiness of character, and ‘without holiness no man shall see the Lord.’ ” Heb. 12, 14. Surely, therefore, we come to a sound conclusion, and one which will appear only more clear, the more closely and *scripturally* we examine the question, in affirming, that neither Holy Scripture at large, nor that portion of it quoted by the Church of England, warrant the limited and arbitrary sense attached to the words Predestination and Election, by Calvinistic interpretation; and that the Predestination revealed to us in the Bible, when enquired into with a careful collation of those passages in the Old and New Testament which bear upon the subject, and a comprehensive view of God’s government of the world, and His dealings with us, “His people and the sheep of His pasture,” will be found to be a Revelation of abounding mercy and goodness, not of causeless exclusion and partiality. We shall thus satisfy ourselves, that Election is not a contracted, anomalous, and unintelligible exercise of the one attribute of supreme sovereignty, opposed to every other known attribute of the Deity, but an act of wide spreading beneficence, arising out of Divine foreknowledge, in harmony, and commensurate with, the vast scale and eternal purposes of Creation, having for its benign object the foreappointed reinstatement into God’s grace and favor, of the whole race of mankind, “not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also,—even us.” Election, in its true sense, may be described as God’s

predestined amnesty,—pardon and peace, universal as gracious,—to all who will embrace the stipulated condition,—faith in that Redeemer whose love has purchased for us “ this grace wherein we stand.”

In the infancy of the world, it pleased God to place before a particular people,—who, if true to their privileges, would have been a leaven to leaven other nations—temporal rewards sufficient for their guidance and encouragement, more darkly revealing in prophecy and in the typical ordinances of that law which was “ a shadow of good things to come,” (Heb. 10, 1,) the glories of eternity, in which His own predestined purpose and election included “ all people.” This eternal purpose the Apostle speaks of as “ The mystery of His will, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men *as it is now* revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit,” namely, “ That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” (Ephesians 3, 6.) It is by bearing in mind this vast and important truth . that we are enabled to explain all seeming difficulties, where Election is treated of in the Apostolic writings, which are difficulties only when dwelt upon as insulated expressions, and neither corrected by weighing their context nor adverting to peculiarity of circumstance which called for their use. Very simple* are the leading truths of

* It is the hand of man which mars this simplicity, and deeply is it to be lamented that the vain and confused controversy of former times, on the

salvation. Man has sinned, "There is no man that sinneth not." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Man therefore must without doubt have perished everlastingly, had not Christ died for his redemption. In virtue of that great sacrifice of love, (Jn. 15,13)—that costly price paid,—God has given unto Christ all who believe in Him and trust in His righteousness, not in their own. He draws us unto Him in His appointed way by the free and gracious promises of the Gospel, and His Holy Spirit knowing our need and "helping our infirmities." That Gospel solemnly assures us, that "Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Those who so believe, thus embracing *the means* vouchsafed by God, become His Elect.

subject of Transubstantiation and Consubstantiation, should have been renewed in the present day. How is it possible that fallible men should ever resolve, by their contradictory and conflicting opinions, that which is, on all sides, confessedly a mystery? Surely, surely, it is better that the Christian should discipline and steady his mind, by trusting, in humility and singleness of heart, to Divine rather than to human authority, in a question which it is beyond human wisdom to determine. Reference to and reliance upon what Scripture has revealed of this holy mystery, entirely satisfies me, as it may well satisfy any Christian, that *as the disciples partook of bread and wine at the last supper, so do we in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.* This is an answer to a thousand theories. As I presume it will hardly be maintained, that the disciples did really eat a portion of our Saviour's flesh as He sat at meat with them, or literally drink of His blood, I conceive no real ground is presented by Scripture which warrants the supposition of *our doing what they did not.* The view taken by our Church, in her 28th Article, expresses all that can scripturally be declared on this point—"The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner."

For man is not Elect by birth, but by belief; not by nature, but by acceptance of grace offered. St. Paul forcibly shows this in addressing the Ephesian converts : " In whom (Christ) ye also trusted, *after* that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation : in whom also, *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise." (Ephes. 1, 13.) So also speaks the Lord, by the mouth of David, "*Because* he hath set his love upon me, *therefore* will I deliver him, I will set him on high because he hath known my name." (Ps. 91, 14.) The ways of God towards man are open, clear, simple, as words of divine truth can make them, for the capacity of all men. " If thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul," is a solemn and gracious address, made alike to mankind under the new and " better covenant," as to the Jew under the old covenant. The choice of life and death is before us now as it has ever been. " See, I have set before thee this day, life and good, and death and evil ; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou *wilt not* hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them—I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing : therefore *choose* life. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not

hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (Deut. 30.)

Inasmuch, therefore, as all who "search the scriptures," or hear the Gospel preached, find themselves therein instructed how to "repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance," (Acts 26, 20,) we may be firmly assured, that there does not live one human being, so taught, who is shut out from the pale of christian salvation by predestiny, partial favor, or any other than his own wilful and inexcusable unbelief; (inexcusable, for it is beyond conception that man should be so earnestly appealed to, and encouraged to believe in God, holy and true, and yet not be enabled to obey the gracious bidding;) not one who is not *equally* and vitally interested in the offer of mercy, or who is denied sufficient means for the acceptance of that Gospel which was preached to the poor, the "glad tidings of great joy which are for all people," and who has not grateful cause to join the "Heavenly host" in their hymn of praise, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."



